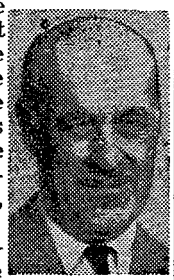
Eastland Runs for Political Life

By Drew Pearson

Attorney General Nicholas de B. Katzenbach has sent a considerable number of Federal registrars to enroll Negro voters in the South, but there is one county where registrars are as scarce as water on the Sahara — Sunflower County, Miss.


Pearson

This happens to be the home county of James O. Eastland, cigar-chomping, genial chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who as such rules on many Justice Department problems.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has unanimously ordered new elections in all but two towns in Sunflower County. Elections were held last year, and so few Negroes voted that the Court essentially ruled new elections must be held after a reasonable number of Negroes were qualified to vote.

This puts it right up to the Justice Department. It knows that 93 per cent of the white population of Sunflower County is registered, as against only 11 per cent of the Negro population. In the rest of Mississippi outside Sunflower County, 43 per cent of the Negroes are registered.

In Sunflower County 65 per cent of the population is Negro.

Meanwhile, kindly Attorney General Katzenbach has sent no Federal registrars to Sunflower County, the home of Sen. Eastland. He did send them last year to Bolivar County, which adjoins the rear of Sen. Eastland's plantation. But after only one day he yanked them out.

You can guess who protested.

The Attorney General, of course, is not unaware that a very hot election campaign is going on in Mississippi with "Big Jim" Eastland running scared. In fact he is running for his political life.

Lined up against him are Rep. Prentiss Walker, only Republican Congressman elected from Mississippi who is backed by a coalition of John Birchites, Republicans and new Negro voters.

Negro voters don't love Walker, but they love Eastland less. They figure that with Eastland removed as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, his reactionary hand would be removed from the wrist of the Justice Department.

If the Attorney General sent Federal registrars to Sunflower County, Rep. Walker would raise the hue and cry that "Eastland can't control the Justice Department any more."

So, while 65 per cent of the population in Sunflower is Negro and only 11 per cent is registered to vote, no registrars are sent to Sunflower County.

NOTE—If Eastland should be defeated, Negroes won't get much of a break on the Judiciary Committee. Next in line to succeed him is John McClellan of Arkansas, who shares Eastland's race views; then Sen. Sam Ervin of North Carolina with similar views.

NBC to White House

Robert E. Kintner, former president of the American Broadcasting Company and former chairman of the National Broadcasting Company, attended his first Cabinet meeting the other day as LBJ's Secretary of the Cabinet.

He sat at the large oval Cabinet table as the President went the round, calling on each member of his official staff, pointedly asking questions about problems which obviously he knows as much about as the Cabinet members themselves.

It was a meeting presided over by a man who never forgets a fact, has a steel trap mind and expects fast action. When it was all over, one member of the Cabinet asked Kintner: "Well, what did you think of it?"

"My God!" exclaimed the somewhat dazed new Secretary of the Cabinet, "I've never seen anything like it."

Then he added, "You know, he could run a pretty big company."

Student Vacations

In contrast to the thousands of students who crowded into Daytona Beach for the Easter vacation, here is what some other students have done with their vacations, both past and present.

Last Christmas, the Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania sent a delegation of students to Tribbett, Miss., to build a community center. They raised most of the money necessary for the lumber and materials, spent their vacation as carpenters.

This Easter, 32 students from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, are moving into the Youngstown slum areas to work with the Neighborhood Youth Corps and high school dropouts.

Another group of Ohio University students, from foreign countries, is working in the Youngstown slum areas, painting, repairing and cleaning up houses where local residents have long been asking the City Planning Commission for help but not getting it.

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Drew Pearson will discuss over WTOP Radio at 6:40 tonight whether free elections in Vietnam would result in the United States being asked to leave.